



# *News from* **SALEM COUNTY**

## Office of Public Information

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### **MENENDEZ, LAUTENBERG ANNOUNCE \$18.5 MILLION TO SUPPORT PORT AND RAIL IMPROVEMENTS Salem County Railroad to Receive Funding**

(SALEM, NJ) – Freeholders Beth Timberman and Dale Cross announced today that they have been notified by U.S. Senators Robert Menendez and Frank Lautenberg that the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has awarded \$18.5 million in TIGER funds to support the Delaware River Rail/Port Improvement strategy which, when leveraged with private investment, will create thousands of new jobs, invest in the region's rail infrastructure and intermodal capacity, and boost New Jersey's economy.

"At a time of real economic uncertainty, this project will create good jobs in New Jersey and provide a shot in the arm to our economy," said Menendez. "This is exactly the kind of public-private partnership we need to support sustainable development and get our economy moving."

"This critical federal investment will create jobs, strengthen major commercial corridors in South Jersey and improve our state's economy," stated Lautenberg, a member of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Subcommittee, which funds this program. "Transportation is the lifeblood of New Jersey's economy and I will continue fighting to strengthen our infrastructure and invest in our ports, rails and bridges."

The Delaware River Rail and Port Improvement effort is being undertaken by the South Jersey Port Corporation (SJPC), the County of Salem and Conrail. The partnership will use the federal resources to leverage tens of millions in additional private resources in order to renew ports at Salem and Paulsboro and help finance improvements to the Camden Port, make much needed upgrades to the rail network that links the ports with the rest of region and nation, and make permanent improvements to the DelAir bridge which links New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

"On behalf of the entire Salem County Board of Chosen Freeholders, we would like to thank Senators Menendez Lautenberg along with Congressmen Robert Andrews and Frank LoBiondo," said Freeholder Beth Timberman. "We have persevered through long-standing efforts to engage the federal government and work with the private sector to maximize the utility of the rail line and to bring economic growth to the County and the region."



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The \$18.5 million was awarded through the competitive Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grant program. The TIGER program enables DOT to use a rigorous process to select projects with exceptional benefits, explore ways to deliver projects faster and save on construction costs, and make investments in our Nation's infrastructure that make communities more livable and sustainable.

"It is not yet known what portion of the \$18.5 million will be designated for the County's railroad," said Freeholder Dale Cross. "We still have meetings to attend to determine what the priorities will be."

The railroad is an 18-mile stretch of track that runs from Swedesboro, Gloucester County to the Salem Port. The rail has been owned by Salem County since the mid 1980's. The track is used to run raw materials to manufacturing plants such as Mannington Mills and the Anchor Glass Container Corporation. The track is also utilized by the South Jersey Farmers Exchange so agricultural products can ship out via the Salem Port. In total, the County of Salem estimates that the rail line supports over 1,400 jobs. U. S. Rail Corporation of New Jersey (USRNJ) operates the line.

"USRNJ shares our goal to improve rail service to current customers," said Timberman. "In turn, this will increase rail volume, creating additional jobs and maintaining current employment levels. In order to increase rail efficiency, USRNJ will eventually rehabilitate the entire rail line, and build a new yard track."

The award announcement culminates a two-year process to secure this critical funding.

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